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Advancement of women

Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Violence against women

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report summarizes the status of preparations for the study on violence against women. It highlights the context, value added, goals and scope of the study and gives an overview of ongoing and planned preparatory activities, in particular efforts to ensure the active participation of all stakeholders in the process. It summarizes the status of substantive preparations.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 58/185, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to conduct an in-depth study on all forms of violence against women and, on the basis thereof, to submit a report, with the study as an annex, to the Assembly at its sixtieth session. The study and report are to include action-oriented recommendations, for consideration by States, encompassing, inter alia, effective remedies and prevention and rehabilitation measures. The resolution requested that the study be conducted in close cooperation with all relevant bodies of the United Nations, as well as with the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, its causes and consequences. The resolution called for the solicitation of information, including on strategies, policies, programmes and best practices, from Member States and relevant non-governmental organizations.

2. At its fifty-eighth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 58/147, entitled "Elimination of domestic violence against women", and decided to continue consideration of this question at its sixtieth session.

3. At its fifty-ninth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 59/165, entitled "Working towards the elimination of crimes against women and girls committed in the name of honour", in which it requested the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the resolution in his report on the question of violence against women to the Assembly at its sixtieth session. At the same session, the Assembly adopted resolution 59/167, entitled "Elimination of all forms of violence against women, including crimes identified in the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled 'Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century'", in which it requested the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report on the matter to the Assembly at its sixtieth session.

4. The process of preparation of the study, which will also respond to the mandates provided under resolutions 59/165 and 59/197, is as important as the study itself. It is a unique opportunity for highlighting the continuing challenges in combating all forms and manifestations of violence against women. The study is a vehicle for galvanizing attention to the issue, enhancing political commitment at the highest levels, and accelerating momentum and strengthening concerted action at the national and international levels. The study and its preparatory process should result in increased accountability of all actors for action against violence against women.

5. A number of factors, including the preparation of the 10-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, in February and March 2005, limited the capacity of the Secretariat, as well as of other stakeholders, to establish the necessary cooperation and conduct adequate consultative processes to achieve these goals. For this reason, the present interim report on the study is being submitted to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. The study itself, together with a report by the Secretary-General, will be submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session.

6. This new time line will provide the necessary time to undertake an extensive consultation process aimed at increasing political commitment for action to combat

all forms of violence against women. Efforts are planned to ensure that all relevant stakeholders can participate in a meaningful way and to strengthen momentum for implementation of the action-oriented recommendations that will be submitted to the General Assembly, for consideration by States, at its sixty-first session.

7. The present interim report contains a summary of the status of preparations and a preliminary discussion of substantive issues.

II. Framework for the preparation of the study

A. Context of the study

8. The General Assembly has provided critical leadership in the global effort to combat all forms of violence against women. Its landmark Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (resolution 48/104), which also contains a definition of violence against women, provides the framework for analysis and action at the national and international levels. According to the article 1 of the Declaration, the term "violence against women" means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. Article 2 elaborates that violence against women encompasses but is not limited to physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family and within the general community and perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.

9. The General Assembly currently deals with various aspects of violence against women on a biennial basis. It has considered the issue of violence against women migrant workers since 1992; trafficking in women since 1994; traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women and girls since 1997; the elimination of all forms of violence against women, including crimes identified in the outcome document of the twenty-third special session, since 2000; the elimination of crimes against women committed in the name of honour, also since 2000; and the elimination of domestic violence against women since 2003.

10. The Commission on the Status of Women did not complete work on agreed conclusions on violence against women at its forty-seventh session, in March 2003. An effort within the General Assembly to address different forms and manifestations of violence against women in 2003 similarly did not result in the adoption of a comprehensive resolution. Instead, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare an in-depth study on all forms and manifestations of violence against women. That was the first time that the Assembly had provided a mandate for an in-depth and comprehensive study. It is envisaged that the study and its action-oriented recommendations, together with the preparatory process, will strengthen the basis for intergovernmental consensus and action by the Assembly to enhance the global policy framework for combating violence against women, and in particular for accelerating the implementation of existing commitments on violence against women.

11. The extensive work undertaken by different actors at different levels has led to a better understanding of violence against women and appreciation of its impact. In the process, an international legal, policy and programmatic framework for

combating it has emerged. This framework addresses the different forms and types of violence, in public as well as in private settings.

12. Most significantly, general recommendation 19 (1992) of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women clarified that gender-based violence constituted discrimination within the meaning of article 1 of the Convention and that discrimination against women was a major cause of such violence. It underlined that gender-based violence seriously inhibited women's ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men. General recommendation 19 placed gender-based violence within the human rights framework. States, entities of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations, civil society, researchers and individual women are using this framework for preventing and responding to violence against women and for enhancing accountability.

13. Despite progress in the development of standards and norms there has not been a comparable improvement in the systematic availability of data on the nature, prevalence and incidence of the various types of violence against women. The limitations or lack of such data is seen as a significant constraint to effective policymaking. Moreover, the implementation of international legal norms and policies remains insufficient and inconsistent in all parts of the world. This is due largely to a lack of political will, inadequate budgetary resources and a failure to create and maintain a political and social environment where such violence would be unacceptable.

14. The first Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences noted at the end of her nine-year tenure that "While at the normative level the needs of women are generally adequately addressed, the challenge lies in ensuring respect for an effective implementation of existing standards and laws. Much more remains to be done to create ... an environment where women can truly live free from gender-based violence" (E/CN.4/2003/75, executive summary). The study aims to contribute to this endeavour while avoiding duplication of existing and ongoing mandates and activities.

B. Value added of the study

15. Violence against women has become an important focus of action at the national and international levels. Significant work has been undertaken by States, entities of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and researchers to document violence against women and to develop responses to prevent violence from occurring, to prosecute and punish perpetrators and to provide remedies and relief to victims. The study will build on these efforts. At the same time, the study must be seen in the context of the ongoing work of the General Assembly: by mandating the preparation of the study, the Assembly signalled the importance it attaches to violence against women. It should be a benchmark in the ongoing work on violence against women and pave the way forward. It will highlight key issues for consideration by the General Assembly, including in relation to data on various forms and types of violence against women; factors that constrain effective implementation of existing standards and laws and promising practices and approaches for overcoming such constraints; the linkages between violence against women and other threats to women's human rights; new forms of

violence against women and sites where such violence is perpetrated; and responsibilities of State and non-State actors for such violence. The document is expected to propose strategic measures for further action by the Member States. It is hoped that broad-based consultations with all relevant stakeholders during the preparatory process will enhance consensus on the key issues and recommendations with a view to increasing momentum for concrete action and enhancing accountability.

C. Goals of the study

16. In this context, the study is intended to support further action by the General Assembly. It will be aimed at:

(a) Highlighting the persistence and unacceptability of all forms of violence against women in all parts of the world;

(b) Identifying ways and means for better and more sustained and effective implementation of Government commitments and obligations to combat all forms of violence against women, and increasing accountability;

(c) Strengthening political commitment and joint efforts of all stakeholders to prevent and eliminate violence against women.

17. The study will enhance the knowledge base with regard to the extent and prevalence of violence against women and expose the gaps and challenges in the availability of data, including methodologies for assessing its prevalence. It will synthesize causes and consequences, including costs of such violence, and link these to possible preventive and remedial action. It will discuss reasons for the persistence of violence against women and identify good-practice examples and effective strategies to combat such violence.

18. Keeping in mind the conclusion of the Special Rapporteur, the study will put forward key, strategic recommendations for action by the General Assembly that will be aimed at enhancing implementation of existing standards and laws. It will build on the work of intergovernmental and expert bodies of the United Nations, including the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences and the other special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights, as well as the human rights treaty bodies. It will also be informed by work undertaken at the regional level, such as within the framework of the Organization of American States, the African Union and the Council of Europe, as well as the work of international and regional judicial bodies.

D. Scope of the study

19. In its resolution 58/185 the General Assembly called for the study to cover all forms and manifestations of violence against women as identified in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, the outcome of the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" and other relevant documents, disaggregated by type of violence. The study will also draw upon resolutions of intergovernmental bodies, including the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Commission on the Status of Women, the

Commission on Human Rights, and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and other international and regional norm- and standard-setting efforts, as well as the jurisprudence and practice resulting from the application and interpretation of these standards, such as the work of the human rights treaty bodies and special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights and international and regional courts and tribunals.

20. The study will use the human rights framework for addressing violence against women, linking it to the persistence of structural inequality and discrimination against women as both a cause and a consequence of such violence. It will therefore draw from treaties, conventions and declarations at the international and regional levels as well as the outcome documents of global conferences of the United Nations. The study will reflect the expanding understanding of the types and manifestations of violence against women that engage the responsibility of the State and require intervention. It will also highlight that violence against women is being addressed with increasing specificity and focus on the continuum of such violence from the private to the public sphere across different forms of violence, as well as throughout the life cycle. The implications of this continuum for legislative, policy and programme responses will be highlighted.

21. The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women addresses violence which takes place in the family and in the community, as well as violence which is perpetrated or condoned by the State. The Special Rapporteur on violence against women has recently suggested an expansion of these conceptual boundaries to embrace the whole spectrum of activities from the domicile to the transnational arena, indicating that such an expansion would allow for the location of acts of violence that may not be immediately apparent as well as those that emerge and gain visibility as a result of the dialectics of global change (E/CN.4/2004/66, para. 40).

22. In an effort to contribute to enhanced implementation of the existing normative and policy frameworks, the study will consider States' responsibility, under the principle of due diligence, to prevent, investigate and punish acts of violence against women, whether those acts are perpetrated by the State or by private persons, as well as to provide remedies for victims. The implications of this responsibility will be considered, particularly in relation to the prevention of violence against women. Accountability of non-State actors will be discussed.

23. While significant attention is being paid to some forms of violence against women, such as domestic violence, other forms remain hidden, are less well studied and receive less attention in legal and policy responses. The study will pay particular attention to such types and forms of violence against women. It will also examine the factors that increase women's vulnerability to violence, such as race, ethnicity, age or disability, as well as specific causes and consequences of such violence. Likewise, some forms of violence against women are more commonly or more easily captured in quantitative assessments either through population-based surveys or use of administrative data, while other forms of violence against women will require different methodologies. The study will indicate these challenges and propose ways for improving data collection and their use for formulating responses to violence.

24. The Special Rapporteur noted that "violence [against women] must be addressed on multiple levels and in multiple sectors of society simultaneously, taking direction from local people on how women's rights may be promoted in a

given context" (E/CN.4/2003/75, executive summary). Many actors have undertaken multiple efforts, as summarized, for example, in the 10-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (E/CN.6/2005/2, paras. 194-240). Examples of good practice can guide interventions and practice, and the study will indicate such examples in relation to different types and manifestations of violence against women.

III. Status of preparations

25. The preparatory process is integral to the study and is aimed at ensuring that Member States, non-governmental organizations, entities of the United Nations system and other stakeholders can contribute in a meaningful way and that existing experience and knowledge to combat violence against women is reflected in the study. The process is also critical for creating the momentum necessary to achieve effective follow-up to and implementation of the recommendations which the study will be proposing to the General Assembly for action. Involvement of stakeholders will also enhance opportunities for subsequent monitoring of recommendations.

26. The present section summarizes the process so far and the mechanisms in place to ensure the involvement of all stakeholders, as well as steps taken to gather and reflect the inputs from all interested stakeholders. It also gives an overview of future activities.

A. Mechanisms to ensure involvement of all stakeholders

27. Two consultative mechanisms have been established in support of the preparation of the study. A Task Force comprising representatives of entities of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations, including regional networks, serves as the main conduit for information exchange and for channelling information, comments and suggestions to the Secretariat. It regularly meets at United Nations Headquarters in New York and also uses electronic means to expand opportunities for consultation and active contributions by entities and organizations not represented at Headquarters. An advisory committee consisting of 10 high-level, internationally recognized experts in the field of violence against women provides guidance and advice at critical junctures in the preparatory process of the study. So far, consultations with the advisory committee have taken place primarily via electronic means, while a meeting is planned at a later stage of the preparatory process to review and provide comments on draft chapters of the study.

B. Contributions by and outreach to all relevant stakeholders

28. The study will draw from the information available from Member States, entities of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations, and will also draw from the extensive research and literature available on the topic.

29. Outreach to stakeholders is aimed at ensuring that all relevant information is channelled into the preparatory process and that these stakeholders effectively use the preparation of the study to advance towards the achievement of its goals. A page on the website of the Division for the Advancement of Women ensures ongoing

information dissemination and encourages the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders.

30. Many Member States provided information on violence against women in their responses to the 10-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (E/CN.6/2005/2 and Corr.1). States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women regularly address the question of violence against women in their reports submitted under article 18 of the Convention. In addition, 45 States have so far provided updates or additional information in response to a request for information contained in a note verbale of March 2005. As the study will be completed later than initially anticipated, States are encouraged to provide such information by the end of October 2005.

31. Governments are encouraged to undertake activities at the national level to enhance concerted action to combat violence against women. The Government of France organized an international conference, in cooperation with the presidency of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, on the theme "violence against women in the twenty-first century", held on 28 and 29 April 2005, which also provided input to the study.

32. An inventory of relevant activities of entities of the United Nations system is being compiled, and entities also provide information through the Task Force. They have been encouraged to organize specific events on violence against women, or to add a segment or a focus on violence against women to previously planned activities. It is hoped that these efforts will expand opportunities, especially at the regional level, for all interested stakeholders to contribute a broad range of perspectives and ensure that key issues are raised and can be addressed.

33. United Nations bodies, including the seven human rights treaty bodies and the special procedures mandate holders, have been invited to provide their views and suggestions and to comment in particular on the linkages between violence against women and their respective mandates. The Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women addressed the twelfth meeting of the special procedures mandate holders on 21 June 2005 to discuss the process, as well as opportunities for cooperation, and invited the mandate holders to draw attention to the study whenever possible.

34. Violence against women is an issue that many of the special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights have addressed in relation to their particular mandates. By highlighting the linkages between violence against women and their respective mandates, special procedures have demonstrated the implications of such violence for all aspects of women's lives and the enjoyment of all other rights. The analyses and recommendations of the special procedures on forms and manifestations of violence against women will inform the study. The mandate holders have, inter alia, discussed the linkages between the right to adequate housing and domestic violence; the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and types of violence against women such as rape and other forms of sexual violence; and violence against women and HIV/AIDS. Particular forms of violence against women have also been discussed in relation to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, freedom of religion or belief, and the right to food.

35. The work of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women in its entirety will be drawn upon for the study. The Special Rapporteur is a member of the advisory committee, which provides guidance to the Secretariat. The Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Director and staff of the Division for the Advancement of Women have met with the Special Rapporteur to consult on progress in the preparations of the study. Updates are also provided via correspondence. The Special Rapporteur was invited to participate in the expert group meetings organized by the Division; a staff member of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights attended on her behalf.

36. Human rights treaty bodies have addressed various forms of violence against women, recognizing that they are related to other forms of discrimination and impede the enjoyment of other human rights and fundamental freedoms. The work of and approach taken by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, reflected in its general recommendation 19, concluding comments and views and recommendations under the Optional Protocol to the Convention, will be given particular consideration. The Committee's work highlights the types of violence against women that persist in States parties, gaps and challenges in combating such violence and the kinds of measures States parties are expected to implement. The Committee's concluding comments provide benchmarks for future action by States parties. The Committee increasingly stresses the need for impact assessments of actions taken and discusses the general framework within which violence against women takes place and persists. At its thirty-third session, in July 2005, the Committee discussed the study and provided views and suggestions on its approach and content. The Committee intends to continue this discussion at its thirty-fourth session, in January 2006.

37. Non-governmental organizations have a key role in the preparatory process. They have been invited to use the study as a vehicle to galvanize action for policy outcomes and work within their communities, and with Governments at the national, regional and global levels, towards a more determined effort to eliminate violence against women. A guidance note for inputs from non-governmental organizations has been widely disseminated.

38. In an effort to ensure coordination with the secretariat responsible for the study on violence against children, representatives of that secretariat participated in both expert meetings organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women (see sect. D below), and the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women met with the independent expert on the study on violence against children in 2004 and 2005 to discuss issues of common concern. A panel discussion will be organized jointly in the course of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

C. Ongoing and future activities

39. In the light of the decision to finalize the study for submission to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, the months ahead will be used for enhanced and intensified consultation processes among all interested stakeholders. These efforts will include briefings, consultations and workshops at United Nations Headquarters and will target Member States and other interested stakeholders. Such events will be organized in the lead-up to and during the sixtieth session of the Assembly, in

conjunction with the fiftieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, as well as of the sessions of other functional commissions, in the spring of 2006. A workshop for United Nations entities is under preparation, which will be aimed at identifying strategies for ensuring a more consistent response by the United Nations system to violence against women at the national level and gaps to be addressed at the international level. An online discussion will be conducted by the Division for the Advancement of Women in September/October 2005 to offer an additional opportunity for providing comments and contributions. A calendar of activities, posted on the website of the Division, provides current information.

40. Discussions and exchanges of views concerning the study and its key issues and recommendations will also be organized in conjunction with events organized by other entities, such as academic meetings, forums of non-governmental organizations and Government-sponsored conferences. Non-governmental organizations have prepared a calendar of previously planned events where there may be opportunities to promote the study and solicit inputs from civil society.

D. Substantive preparations

41. On the basis of the mandate provided by the General Assembly and the continuing review and analysis of the above-mentioned inputs and of literature on the topic, a preliminary annotated outline was prepared and submitted to the advisory committee for review and comments. On the basis of feedback received from members, the outline and annotations were further refined (see annex).

42. Expert group meetings and expert briefs are supporting the preparation of particular aspects of the study. The work of the special procedures and human rights treaty bodies is also being reviewed for reflection in the analysis of the study. Those efforts are summarized below.

43. Two expert group meetings have been held, on the question of data and statistics on violence against women and on good practices in combating and eliminating violence against women. Those meetings took place from 11 to 14 April and from 17 to 20 May 2005, respectively.

44. The first expert meeting was organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Europe and the World Health Organization (WHO), to assess data and statistics already collected and available regarding the extent and prevalence of all forms of violence against women, evaluate the quality and completeness of the data, identify gaps in data and challenges in methodology for data collection and propose steps to overcome these. Experts drew attention to the types of data needed to support the development of more effective policies and programmes to address violence against women and provide services for victims.

45. Experts presented international and national initiatives to collect data on violence against women, including international surveys such as the WHO multi-country study, the domestic violence module of the Demographic and Health Surveys and the International Violence Against Women Survey (carried out by the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute and Statistics Canada), as well as national initiatives to

assess the extent of violence against women through surveys and routine collection of administrative data and data collected by service providers (in relation to crime, health, shelter, death) and other sources.

46. The expert group assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the two most common forms of data collection on violence against women, i.e., population-based surveys and the extrapolation of data on such violence from service-based records and statistics. Both forms are used primarily for the assessment of domestic and intimate-partner violence. Population-based surveys reflect actual occurrences of violence against women, as opposed to reported cases, and are therefore considered the most accurate method for collecting such data. The results can also be generalized to estimate the prevalence of violence in the overall population. However, such surveys can be costly and logistically difficult to reproduce and are subject to great variations in methodology which make the results difficult to compare over time and across different regions.

47. Data collected routinely from services are useful in assessing the scope and nature of violence against women in specific populations and can contribute to an understanding of societal response, as well as the response of agencies in addressing such violence. They do not provide an indication of prevalence. The availability and quality of service-based data vary greatly, and such data are rarely collected in a systematic manner. Resource-poor areas and regions where violence against women is stigmatized and consequently underreported pose additional challenges to the collection of data from service statistics. Neither of these two methods allows for assessments of the extent of particular forms of violence against women, for which particular surveys need to be implemented.

48. The expert group meeting concluded with recommendations for enhancing the collection of data to assess the extent of violence against women and stressed the paramount importance of women's safety, as well as confidentiality and privacy in conjunction with all data collection. It was also stressed that all data collection efforts should be aimed at improving policies and enhancing services or initiatives to address violence against women.

49. Experts participating in the second expert group meeting discussed good-practice initiatives in law, service provision and prevention. Experts agreed on the need for a comprehensive, coordinated and holistic approach to prevent and eliminate violence against women that addresses such violence in a human rights framework and ensures State accountability. They stressed the need for initiatives to be dynamic, i.e., capable of evolution over time and responsive to changing circumstances, and context-specific. Experts suggested the use of the concept of "promising practices", since many factors had an impact on the quality or effectiveness of a particular practice and the parameters for evaluating a particular practice were seldom spelled out clearly. They cautioned against generalizations and suggested instead a more modest approach to providing examples of currently applied practices and interventions which practitioners and evaluations suggested were good and/or promising. At the same time, experts noted that Governments, as States parties to a range of international human rights instruments, generally were already required to protect women's human rights. The need to establish general principles of good practice was therefore more applicable to service provision. Experts noted the inadequacy of resources allocated to dealing with violence against women, as well as a lack of research data and documentation, especially impact

assessments, for measuring the effectiveness of initiatives. Experts emphasized the key role of women's non-governmental organizations in designing and implementing initiatives to combat violence against women.

50. Several background papers on particular aspects have been commissioned, including on the costs of violence against women, data on trafficking in women and the international legal framework for combating violence. As work progresses, additional papers may be commissioned.

E. Resources available for the preparation of the study

51. In operative paragraph (a) of its resolution 58/185 the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to conduct the in-depth study "from existing available resources and, if necessary, supplemented by voluntary contributions". A funding proposal of April 2004 indicated requirements in the amount of $550,000 for the preparation of the study. The initial funding proposal did not cover many of the activities now being envisaged to enhance the consultation and awareness-raising process related to the study. In July 2005, a supplemental proposal for $120,000 to implement additional activities was prepared and submitted to potential donors. As of July 2005, the Governments of Austria, France and the Netherlands had contributed $480,000. The balance of $190,000 is being sought so that all planned preparatory activities can be implemented.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

52. **An extensive framework of standards and norms to combat violence against women exists. States, entities of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders at the national, regional and global levels have undertaken a broad range of efforts to prevent and combat violence against women. However, such violence persists in epidemic proportions in all parts of the world, and new forms of violence against women emerge.**

53. **The preparation of the Secretary-General's in-depth study on violence against women is a unique opportunity for challenging a culture where violence against women is allowed to persist. The active involvement and contributions of stakeholders during the preparatory process is expected to support effective action by the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. This process will ensure that key issues are addressed and strategic recommendations proposed, leading to better, more systematic and effective implementation of the existing standards and norms to combat violence against women. It will also enhance monitoring and accountability to secure lasting change.**

54. **The General Assembly, at its sixtieth session, may wish to take note of the present interim report and decide to consider the question of violence against women at its sixty-first session on the basis of the study and a report of the Secretary-General.**

Annex

Preliminary outline of the study*

Introduction

1. The introduction will present the mandate for the study as reflected in General Assembly resolution 58/185, in which the Secretary-General was requested to prepare an in-depth study on all forms and manifestations of violence against women. It will outline the goals and objectives of the study, present the methodology used to complete it and give an overview of the research and other information sources used in its preparation. It will give an indication of the contents of the chapters of the study and its conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter one
Overview

2. The overview chapter will frame the issue of violence against women and the study's approach to this challenge. It will give a brief historical overview of the development of international awareness on the issue and of the international normative framework on violence against women. It will highlight the use of the human rights framework for tackling violence against women, contained in treaties, conventions and declarations at the international and regional levels, as well as global conferences of the United Nations. It will discuss State responsibility for addressing violence against women and flag in particular the role of the criminal justice system. The role of non-State actors will be raised.

3. It will summarize the roles played by various mechanisms at the international and regional levels, in particular human rights treaty monitoring bodies and special procedures, in increasing attention to the problem.

4. The overview will also point to the role of non-governmental organizations, especially women's organizations, in bringing violence against women onto the global agenda. The role of men in combating violence against women will be noted.

Chapter two
Overview of forms and manifestations of violence against women

A. Violence against women perpetrated primarily in the family

B. Violence against women perpetrated primarily in the community

C. Violence against women primarily perpetrated or condoned by the State

5. The chapter will describe the types and manifestations of violence against women and the sites (settings) — family, community, State — where violence takes place and/or is condoned. It will discuss the expanding understanding of the types and manifestations of violence against women that engage State responsibility and

* The study is expected not to exceed 120 pages, including footnotes and annex. The approximate length of each chapter remains to be determined.

require intervention. These types and manifestations are reflected in particular in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Committee's general recommendation 19, the Beijing Platform for Action, the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights and the General Assembly, and in other norm- and standard-setting efforts, such as the international criminal tribunals, ad hoc and permanent. They are also reflected in the practice that has developed in the application and interpretation of these standards, such as the work of the tribunals, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, as well as of human rights treaty bodies and other special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights. The contribution of regional mechanisms will be reviewed.

6. The chapter will discuss the response by international and/or regional standard-setting mechanisms, and the current practice — primarily at the international level — for prevention, prosecution and punishment. The limitations of this categorization and the overlapping sites of perpetration of different forms of violence will also be discussed. The chapter will point out that the same type or similar types of violence against women (for example, rape) occur in more than one setting and will discuss the related obligations for combating such violence.

7. The chapter will draw attention to factors that increase women's vulnerability to violence, such as race, ethnicity, age and disability. The chapter will also flag key issues that require further attention to strengthen the global policy response.

Chapter three
Causes and consequences, including costs, of violence against women

A. The role of discrimination against women

B. Social, economic, cultural, traditional and religious causes and risk factors

C. Linking the factors: ecological model of risk factors and causes of violence against women, linking together individual, relationship, community and society (State) factors

D. Consequences of violence against women at the personal, family and community level, including costs

E. Intersectionalities: violence against women as a cause and as a consequence

F. Implications for interventions to prevent violence against women and to provide effective support to victims

G. Recommendations for action

8. This chapter will highlight the causes and risk factors associated with violence against women and the links between particular causes and forms of violence against women. The role of discrimination against women as cause and perpetuating

feature of violence against women will be highlighted. The chapter will underscore the challenges in pinpointing the various causes and stress the importance of understanding the interrelated risk factors as the primary step in developing effective prevention strategies.

9. The chapter will address the immediate, medium-term and long-term consequences of violence against women, emphasizing its impact on women, but also on the family, the community and the society. The chapter will stress the difficulties in identifying and assessing all the possible consequences of violence perpetrated against girls and women, including the psychological ramifications of such violence and their potential long-term impact. The chapter will consider the costs of violence against women by assessing surveys, research and studies on the costs of violence against women at the individual, family, community and societal levels and their scope, content and findings. In this regard, it will discuss the impact of violence against women on development. It will in particular consider consequences of violence against women such as HIV/AIDS, poverty and ill health.

10. The chapter will consider that violence against women can be a cause as well as a consequence, and the implications of this linkage for effective prevention and victim support efforts. The chapter will also consider women as perpetrators of violence against women.

Chapter four
The responsibilities of the State

A. State obligations to prevent, prosecute and punish all forms of violence against women, provide remedies and support victims: evolving international human rights law and practice

B. Areas where States are not meeting their obligations

11. This chapter will discuss State responsibility, in accordance with the principle of due diligence, to address all forms of violence against women as a human rights concern, a responsibility encompassing the prevention of all forms of violence against women, the investigation and prosecution of acts of violence, the punishment of perpetrators, and the provision of support for victims of violence.

Chapter five
Overview of the prevalence and extent of violence against women: statistics and data collection on all forms of violence against women

A. Overview of forms of violence against women based on current availability of data and statistics on violence against women

The types of violence against women on which data are collected

The scope and extent of data collection

Sources of data collection (independent entities, government entities, NGOs)

Methodologies used to collect and analyse the data

B. Gaps and challenges in data collection and methodology

The challenge of underreporting and non-reporting of violence against women

Lack of data collection on certain types of violence against women and by geographical region

Methodological problems in data collection

C. Impact of a lack of or poor data for policymakers and service providers

D. Recommendations for strengthening data collection and addressing gaps

12. This chapter will address the current status of quantitative information available on violence against women and present an overview of the prevalence of various forms of such violence. It will assess the data and statistics currently available regarding the extent and prevalence of forms of violence against women, evaluate the quality of the data and identify remaining gaps in data collection. It will review the methodologies used to compile the data. The chapter will also underscore the gaps and challenges in data collection and methodology. It will discuss the relationship between data availability and effective policymaking and advocacy.

Chapter six
Good practices in addressing violence against women

A. Challenges and key issues for implementation

B. Constitutional and legislative frameworks conducive to preventing and eliminating violence against women

C. Role of the criminal justice sector

D. Policies, strategies and action plans and their relation to legislation

E. Advocacy, education and outreach efforts: the need for multi-stakeholder approaches

F. Implementation and enforcement issues

G. The need for continuing monitoring, evaluation and corrective measures

13. This chapter will highlight the continuing challenges of implementation of the international legal and policy framework on violence against women at the national level and examine the reasons for bottlenecks. It will address the role of men in combating violence against women and examine key issues for strengthening implementation.

14. The chapter will discuss and analyse good-practice examples of legislation, policies, strategies and awareness-raising and capacity-building efforts which have been used and are expected to lead to positive outcomes for women in regard to preventing and combating violence, and to support women's empowerment. It will discuss necessary elements of a comprehensive strategy on violence against women. The chapter will discuss experiences of using multisectoral approaches to combat violence against women and the contributions of various stakeholders. It will also discuss how effective alliances, networks and collaboration among different stakeholders can be forged to respond effectively to violence against women, eliminate discrimination and promote gender equality.

Chapter seven
Conclusions and recommendations

Annex

15. The annex will include acknowledgements and a bibliography, including references to websites.